

Saturday Magazine.

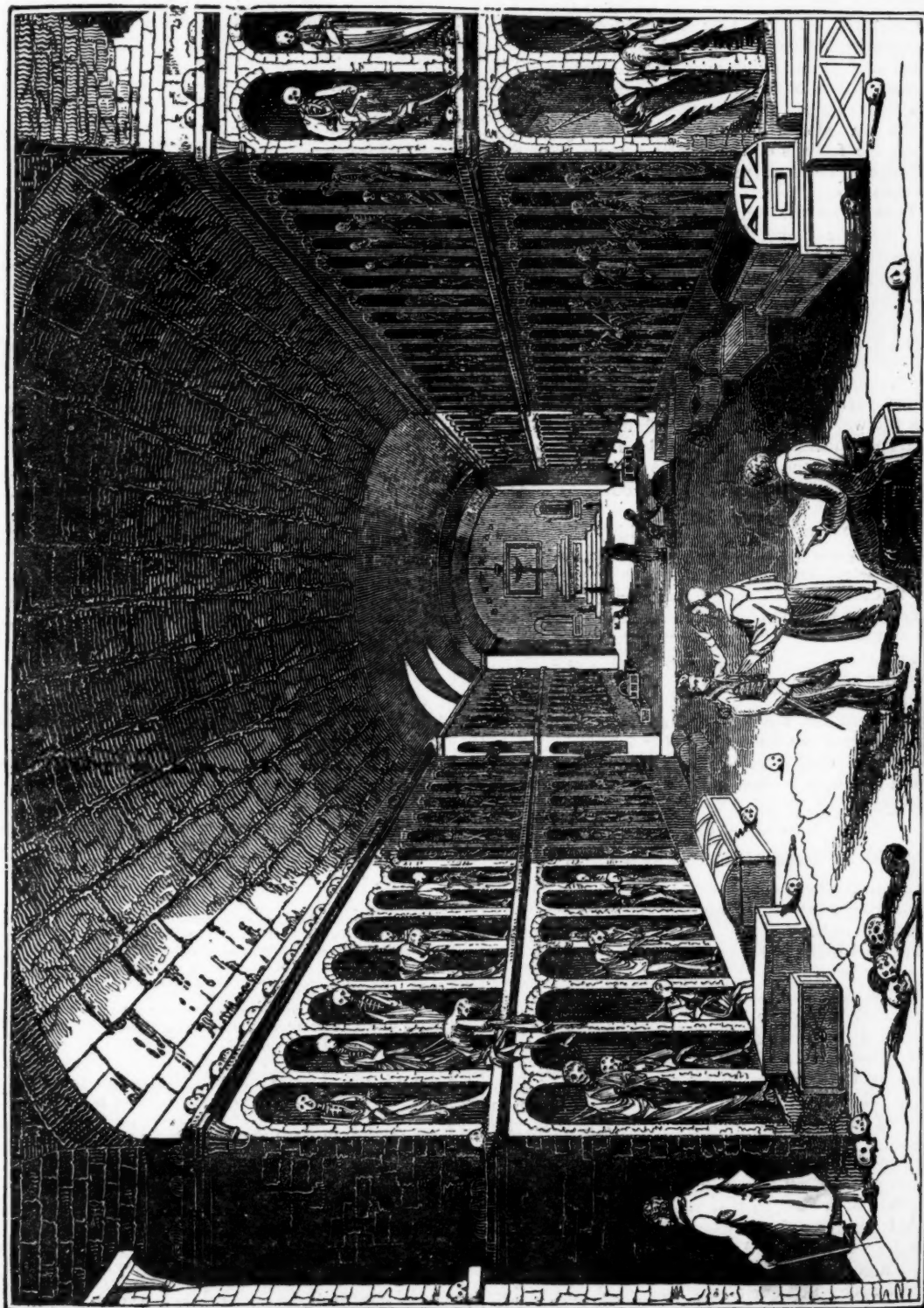
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PRICE
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UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL LITERATURE AND EDUCATION,
APPOINTED BY THE SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE.



CEMETERY OF A CAPUCHIN CONVENT, NEAR PALERMO

A SICILIAN CEMETERY.

THE annexed engraving of one of those cemeteries for the reception of dead bodies, which are common in Sicily, is copied from a print in CAPTAIN SMYTH'S work on *Sicily and its Islands*. This cemetery is in a Capuchin convent in the suburbs of Palermo, and consists of a large subterranean space, clean and airy, and divided into galleries, surrounded with niches, for the reception of the bodies, after they have undergone a certain preparation.

Previously to descending into these extraordinary apartments, the attention of the visitor is directed to the pictures on each side of the door; the one representing the death of a good man, the other that of a sinner, whose dying moments are imbittered by representations of the most appalling anticipations of a future state. Between these pictures there is a sonnet on mortal dissolution; so that, upon the whole, the feelings of the spectator are a good deal excited, and he is prepared to witness a solemn and a mournful spectacle.

On reaching the cemetery, however, it is difficult to express the disgust that is created by the exhibition of the human form so degradingly caricatured. In every direction is seen a ridiculous assemblage of distorted mummies, hanging by the neck or shoulders, and with aspects, features and proportions so strangely altered by the operation of drying, as to present only the most grotesque and revolting remains of human beings. From the curious attitudes into which the greater part of these have fallen, in the decay of ages, the whole scene, when the first feeling of surprise has subsided, is calculated rather to excite derision, than the awful emotions which should naturally arise at the sight of two thousand deceased mortals.

There are four long galleries, with their niches filled with these remains, in various stages of dislocation and decay, besides many coffins containing noblemen in court dresses; and among the principal personages, is a king of Tunis, who died in 1620. At the end of the great corridor is an altar, the front of which is studded with human teeth, skulls, and bones, inlaid in a sort of mosaic work. At the end of one of the galleries is a small apartment, which, says Captain Smyth, I entered, but soon quitted, with the greatest nausea, caused by an exceedingly offensive stench. This was a dirty room, called the oven, in which several bodies, in various stages of putrescence, were undergoing the operation of drying.

THE SHROPSHIRE PEASANT'S SON.

THE following brief biographical sketch has no shade of colouring whatever, other than the very simplicity of truth gives it.

Thomas W. L. was the son of a labouring man in Shropshire, who had no portion of this world's goods to bestow, but he had, what a learned maxim has pronounced to be the best of all portions for our children, a good honest heart. This poor old man, (as the farmer with whom he has worked for many years now testifies,) reared his son with the greatest care, putting him to school, and bringing him up in habits of industry. Thomas went first into service at —, where he remained till his master died, whose good opinion of him was evidenced by leaving him ten pounds, all of which, however, was lost, by the failure of a bank in that place. After this, with mingled feelings of disappointment and encouragement, he went to London; where he was happy in finding a good place, in the best sense of the word, where he remained quiet and contented, identifying

himself in interest and feeling with his master's family. He there became attached to a young woman; but, instead of that thoughtless and improvident haste, which often hurries young people into biting cares, and poverty, and want, he resolved to wait till he could marry with a fair prospect, under Heaven's blessing, of supporting himself and his partner in respectability and comfort. We cannot doubt he would have given as bright an example in humble life, in the character of a husband and a father, as he uniformly had done in that of a domestic servant, and a dutiful affectionate son: and his son would have owed it to his own fault, had he not been able, with the remembrance of such a father and grandfather before him, to cheer himself with the same reflection which has often warmed many an honest farmer's heart, when sharing his best in kind and frugal hospitality with his neighbour, over their Christmas fire:—

He, dying, bequeathed to his son a good name,
Which unsullied descended to me;
For my child I'll preserve it, unblemish'd by shame,
And it still from a spot shall be free.

But, in the case of our Thomas, it pleased God otherwise; he was called hence last December, when he had reached only the age of twenty-six; young in years, but ripe in Christian wisdom, and leaving to his friends a sure and certain hope, that, through the merits of the Redeemer, in whom his soul rested, he is in safe possession of rest and peace.

Never was servant more valued by a master, or more beloved by his master's family than was Thomas in the house of Mr. C. Our friend was carried off by an early, but not an untimely death, for he was a truly religious man; and his principles showed themselves in honesty, fidelity, industry, dutiful devotedness to his master, tender behaviour to his aged and humble father, kindness to all, and in a constant, watchful, cheerful discharge of the duties of religion, especially in a regular attendance, as well at the family prayers as in the house of God and at the Lord's table. His habits of sobriety and steadiness had enabled him to lay by a considerable sum; and, what is more, he had learned, from his Christian instruction, how to make the best use of his money. But the reader will, with more pleasure and profit, gather for himself the character of this good young man, from his own letters, some of which were returned to his master since his death, and by him put into the hands of the writer of this brief memoir. We must, however, be content with a few extracts, though more, of the same feeling and character, have been saved. In May, 1832, when his father was just recovering from a long illness, he thus addresses him:—

"My dearest Father;—I hope you take your illness with calm resignation, as you ought to do; you know, dear father, that for many many years you have been enjoying the best of health; therefore you must now expect to be afflicted. My dear father, if you are afflicted in this world, it is only to draw your affections from things that are present; and I hope to God, to obtain the things that are eternal. I long to be with you, that I could read to you; and, so far as my humble knowledge would allow me, to explain it to you: I feel I should be so happy with you, if it pleased God to let it be so ordered. But not yet: we must wait with patience. My dear father, I never heard you say you had received the Sacrament; now I hope you will take it into serious consideration. You must know, it was not only the rich it was instituted for, but likewise the poor: there is no difference at his table. There was no one poorer than our Saviour himself, in this world's goods,—nor neither was any of his apostles any thing but men who earned their bread by hard labour. The Gospel was preached to the poor first, and by the poor: our prayers are dull and cold, to what theirs were, but, my dear Father, you and I must set about it; for there is no time to be lost.

"If we were together, I could not prevent your accidents and misfortunes; I flatter myself I should be a comfort to you: but it would be only for a few more years, and then what an end! Yes, dearest father, if you have not prayed to God sincerely, now, for your own sake, do. If we do pray sincerely, God will hear our prayers; and if he does, then we shall meet again in heaven, where there is no sorrow, but joy for evermore. My dear father, don't reproach yourself with not beginning sooner, for Christ has said, he that works but one hour in my vineyard, shall receive equal to him that has borne the burden and heat of the day; but do not let this keep you from beginning now; as your time is continually running on, and we don't know, the next minute, but what it may be the last; for young as well as old, the one as the other. There are now so many sudden deaths that it is very alarming; we ought always to hold ourselves in readiness, and watch for our Master's coming; and when he does come, I hope we shall be in readiness, is the sincere prayer of your affectionate Son."

Such were his pious sentiments towards his God. How simply but strongly is his filial affection shown in the following letter to his aged father,—it is dated as late as the 25th of last November,—before the month came round, the Christmas-day to which he so feelingly alludes, he was seized by the illness from which he never recovered. After saying that the letter left him in *perfect good health*, and a prayer for a continuance of God's blessing, he proceeds:—

"Now, my dearest father, I have one request to make of you, and that is, to lie by for a few months in the winter; as I well know what a cold and cough you were used to have, and there is no doubt but that it gets worse and worse every year. So, therefore, my dearest father, I will allow you as much a week as you can get by work, till the winter is over, if it pleases God to spare us so long. When I was young, many and many a day did you work hard to maintain me, and why should I not make a return for that kindness that I received? When I was not able even to ask and beg for protection, I was covered and fed by one of the best and dearest of fathers: would it not be ungenerous in me not to do what now lies in my power for you? As long as I have a penny, you shall share it with me, and as God hath given me strength to work, I shall be most happy to render you all the assistance in my power. I have no one in this world but you at present to provide for; and, therefore, pray do as I wish you:—let me, in your old days, make you happy. I have only one wish more, and then I think I should be happy; if the time was arrived that I had a comfortable home of my own to ask you to; so as I could but be with you, and see your wants; but I must wait a little longer, as the person I should wish to join us by our little fire-side is comfortable now, and I should never wish to make her uncomfortable; as it is my most sincere wish she should have a good and happy home when she changes her situation in life. If it was tomorrow I should be glad—but not so—happiness is not so near for me. But I thank God for all his goodness to me; when I look round and see the hundreds of poor miserable wretches in the streets, it makes my heart ache. It puts me in mind of a hymn that many and many a time I have helped to sing in poor old Stanton Church.

When'er I take my walks abroad,
How many poor I see!
What shall I render to my God,
For all his gifts to me!
Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God hath given me more;
For I have food, while others starve,
And beg from door to door.

"I thank God I have never wanted a bit of bread yet. When I was brought first into the world, I was fostered and fed by you; and now I think it will be my own fault (unless by affliction) if I do; and if that is the case, I hope some kind friend or other will help in time of need. I hope, my dearest father, if your cold is bad, or any other affliction should befall you, you will be patient; as God has said he will not afflict more than you are able to bear. So, therefore, you see how good he is in all his works. I hope you will receive the Sacrament this next Christmas-day that is coming. I feel very anxious you should; for I think it my duty to remind you of it, as God has blessed me with more learning than you. Dear father, take my advice, and pray to Him who made us all; so will I for you

and myself, and may this Christmas be a happy Christmas to you and me, in this life, and in the world to come."

The reader will feel satisfaction in being told, that the good old man received the Sacrament with his master, who writes in a very kind manner about him, but Thomas was not permitted to know this. He is in peace.

"The memory of the just is blessed." J. E. T.

SHERLOCK, the pious father-in-law of the excellent Bishop Wilson, exhorts all attendants upon public worship in these words: "Remember whose service it is you are doing, and continue therein from the beginning to the end, that you may reap the benefit of the whole office, both of the absolution in the beginning, and of the blessing at the end, and of the amens throughout." "The Hebrews have a saying, that whosoever says amen, with all his might, opens the doors of Paradise."

It is recorded of the Hon. Robert Boyle, a man no less learned in the laws and works of nature, than he was well acquainted with the evidences of Christianity, that he never pronounced the name of God without making a short but visible pause in his speech. Surely the conduct of the great philosopher, Robert Boyle, is a reproof to those who use the name of God thoughtlessly, and on any common occasion.

THE longest life is a period scarcely sufficient to prepare for death: compared with this work, all other business is vain and trivial, as the toil of emmets in the path of the traveller, under whose foot they perish for ever; and compared with the happiness which follows that preparation, all enjoyment is unsubstantial and evanescent, as the colours of the bow that appears in the interval of a storm.

THE DELUGE.

BY MRS. HENRY ROLLS.

WHEN o'er the mountains rose the orb of day,
And spread o'er vale and plain his cheering ray,
How swell'd the human bosom with delight,
As the rich landscapes burst upon the sight!
The ripening harvest waved in golden pride,
And clustering vineyards clothed the hillock's side;
Whence rose the song which lighten'd labour's toil,
As bow'd the swain beneath the luscious spoil;
Where the fair valley spread her bosom green,
What varied forms of busy life were seen!
There toil'd the hind, the hunter led the chase,
Or the bold warrior moved with martial grace;
Whilst blooming beauty cull'd the opening flower,
Or led the dance through pleasure's roseate bower;
Then, half-conceal'd beneath the cedar's shade,
The humble dwelling its white walls display'd;
Or the proud city's loftier domes arise,
Where pomp and grandeur caught th' admiring eyes.

Fair was the scene! but guilt and pain were there;
The tyrant master, and the slave's despair;
The haughty brow, that heaven's just God defied,
The lust of pleasure, and the rage of pride;
There from their bowls the midnight revellers reel;
There the fell murderer grasps the reeking steel:
By rapine led, the plunderers track their way,
Through waste and slaughter, to their hapless prey
Vile, idol-gods pollute each shady grove,
And wanton beauty melts in lawless love;
Whilst age and infancy lament in vain,
Or bleed, the victims of the impious train.

Mustering his wrath, awhile his anger stay'd;
Till full their cup, the Lord of Heaven delay'd
To pour his vengeance; as the whirlwind sleeps,
Ere o'er the main with furious blast it sweeps,
Then burst at once, on earth's astonish'd train,
The raging tempest and tremendous rain;
Whilst pealing thunders heaven's vast concave rend,
And, struck by lightning, rolling rocks descend;
High heaves the ocean's bed—the o'erwhelming tide
Rushes against the mountain's yielding side;
'Tis vain for succour to those hills to fly,
For now not e'en their loftiest tops are dry;
Beast, man, and city, share one common grave,
And calm above them rolls the avenging wave;
Whilst yon dark speck, slow floating, now contains,
Of beast or human life the sole remains.

THE BAYEUX TAPESTRY.



Specimen of the Bayeux Tapestry.

THE celebrated tapestry of Bayeux, which still exists, and is publicly exhibited at stated periods in the cathedral of the city, is a very curious monument of the state of the art of embroidering at the time of the Norman Conquest. It is a web of linen, nearly two feet in breadth, and 442 in length, on which is embroidered the history of that memorable expedition, commencing with the embassy of Harold from Edward the Confessor, King of England, to William Duke of Normandy, in 1065, and ending with the death of Harold, in the following year. The scenes of this busy period are successively exhibited, and consist of many hundred figures of men, horses, beasts, birds, trees, houses, castles, and churches, with inscriptions over them explanatory of their meaning and history. This work is understood to have been performed under the direction of Matilda, consort to William the Conqueror, and was not improbably executed by the hands of English women, whose superiority in performances of this kind was then universally acknowledged.

It is now carefully rolled upon a cylinder of wood, which is supported in a slight frame; a winch handle serves to unroll it for occasional exposure, and explanation to the curious. The first portion of the needlework, representing the embassy of Harold, is much defaced. The story is carried through the length of above 200 English feet, with wonderful accuracy, and an evident feeling of Roman art in its latter stages. Both at the top and the bottom of the principal subject there is a running allegorical ornament, of which the constellations of the heavens, and the symbols of agriculture, and of rural occupations form the chief subjects.

We may judge of the importance attached to this tapestry by the French, from the fact of its having been displayed in Paris for two or three months, at the time of the threatened invasion of this country by Napoleon Buonaparte, in order to awaken curiosity, and excite the love of conquest among its citizens. It was afterwards conveyed to one or two seaport towns, and exhibited on the stage of their theatres, as a most important material in dramatic effect.

THE words anciently written on DIALS were often very expressive, though few. Over an arch, which extended across the street of old London Bridge, when houses were there, was a dial with this motto,—*Time and Tide stay for no man*; and on a dial opposite to the north end of Paper-buildings, in the Temple, the following short, but admirable piece of advice—*Begone about your Business*.

MIGRATORY BIRDS.

No. I.

THE instinct which directs birds to migrate from one country to another, is surprising, and the power it exerts over the actions of the feathered tribes truly wonderful; causing them to undertake the most distant and fatiguing flights over seas and lands, the extent and perils of which, (in their first migration at least,) must be entirely unknown to them. The migratory birds, that arrive in such immense numbers in England, and the other temperate climates of Europe, in spring, appear to come from the north of Africa, or parts even more southerly; and their object seems to be to lay their eggs, and hatch their young, in places where the food on which they are supported is to be found in the greatest abundance: while, on the other hand, our winter visitors are evidently driven from their homes in the north, by the severity of the weather, and come for shelter to our milder climate; and it is a remark not far from the truth, that the early arrival of the wild ducks, and other northern birds, indicates a severe winter.

The WRYNECK (represented at page 68 of the first volume), the GREAT PLOVER, and the CHIFF-CHAFF, are our very earliest spring visitors: they make their appearance about the middle or the end of March.

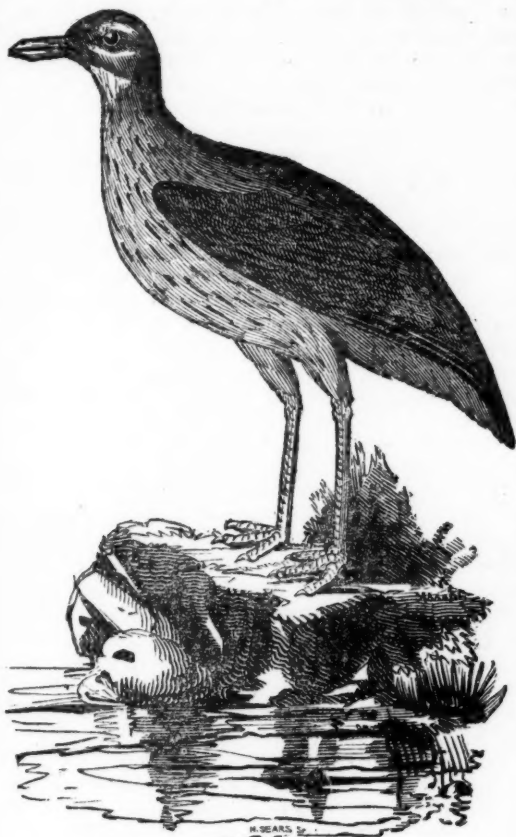
The CHIFF-CHAFF, (*SYLVIA rufa*, Latham.)

THE CHIFF-CHAFF, is thus described by Mr. Gould in his splendid work on the *Birds of Europe*; we have also resorted to his figure, for the representation of this little harbinger of spring. "The Chiff-Chaff so nearly resembles the Willow Wren (*SYLVIA trochilus*) as to be frequently confounded with it; it may, however, be distinguished by its smaller size and darker legs: in addition to this, the streak over the eye is less apparent, and the general plumage not so finely tinged with yellow. It is one of our earliest visitors, and less common than either the Wood Wren, or the Willow Wren; differing from both in its habits and localities.

"Partial to groves and tall trees, it frequents the topmost branches, where it may be heard to utter its short song, composed of two distinctly-repeated notes, *Chiff-Chaff*, which have given origin to its usual name."

The Chiff-Chaff is shorter than the Willow Wren by about an inch, and proportionally less in all its other measurements.

The GREAT PLOVER arrives in England about the latter end of March, or beginning of April.



The GREAT PLOVER, (*CHARADRIUS OEDICREMUS*, Linnaeus.)

It lays its eggs (generally two, never more than three,) on the bare ground, without any nest, in the field; so that the countryman, in stirring his fallows, often destroys them. The young run immediately from the eggs, like partridges, &c., and are withdrawn to some flinty field, by the dam, where they sculk among the stones, which are their best security; for their feathers are so exactly of the colour of our gray spotted flints, that the most exact observer, unless he catches the eye of the young bird, may be eluded.

The eggs are short and round, and of a dirty white, spotted with dark blood-red blotches. They live with us all the spring and summer, and at the beginning of autumn prepare to take leave, by getting together in flocks.

They are not fond of going near the water, but feed on earth-worms, that are common on sheep-walks and downs.

ÆSOP, AND HIS FABLES.

In all ages and nations, the fables of Æsop have been resorted to for the instruction of young people, and have supplied matter for the wisdom of more advanced years. If the infant mind can be taught to abhor violence and injustice by the fable of the *Wolf and the Lamb*; if the advantages of persevering industry can be inculcated by the story of the *Hare and the Tortoise*; and if the disgrace of the bragging traveller can supply the young with a caution against boasting, lessons of more extended wisdom may be derived from the various apologues in which not beasts, fishes, or trees alone, but human beings and fabulous divinities are introduced. To no author, excepting Æsop, has it happened to have portions of

his works condensed into proverbial sayings, passing from mouth to mouth, as matter of familiar conversation, too applicable to demand introduction, too well known to require explanation. Thus, when we speak of *Blowing Hot and Cold*, no one expects that the story of the *Satyr and the Traveller* should be repeated to him; or, when mention is made of the *Dog in the Manger*, the *Viper and the File*, or the *Mountain in Labour*, the mind of the hearer is instantly informed that envious selfishness, malignant and impotent rage, and rash promises, or threats, productive of no consequence, are meant to be described and satirized.

Æsop, the author of most of the fables which are current in the collections passing under his name, made his way to eminence, unfavoured by any circumstances of birth, fortune, or person: he was a Phrygian, of the lowest order of society, a purchased slave, and of person so deformed, that the description of him is nearly hideous; and, as if merit were allotted to him only to show against what difficulties it can successfully struggle, he had an impediment in his speech, which rendered him almost unintelligible. Yet, by persevering patience, and the manly struggle of a firm and exalted mind, he was enabled to become, not only the companion of his superiors, but the instructor of those who most prided themselves on their wisdom. His prudent counsels quieted the minds of the Athenians, when they were ready to break out into fatal violence, at the usurpation of Pisistratus; he taught them the dangers they had to apprehend from the alliances, or even the quarrels, of powerful and dangerous neighbours; and all this by such popular narratives as remain for ever fixed in the memory, and form a continual guide to the judgment.

The effect of his wisdom was such, that he was not only respected and well treated during his life, but, as Phædrus, the most spirited and accomplished of his translators, has informed us, the polite Athenians dedicated a colossal statue to his memory; and, although he had been but a slave, consecrated his fame on an imperishable pedestal, to inform mankind, says the Roman author, that the road to honourable distinction was open to all men.

Wits of the first class in all nations, from Phædrus, in Rome, to La Fontaine, in Paris, have thought their time well employed in collecting, amplifying, pointing, and embellishing the narratives of this author, with the addition of similar stories and anecdotes,—such as passing time and their own observation could supply. Every nation has shown the state of the times, or its prevailing genius, in the manner of rendering, augmenting, or imitating, this, their great model.

Of the imitators of Æsop, it is not intended to speak; but self-denial would be too severely taxed, were no mention to be made of the elegant fictions of Gay, so exquisitely invented, and judiciously applied, as to raise a spark of honest envy even in the friendly bosom of Swift.

It is earnestly to be hoped that the fables of Æsop, as the means of information and instruction, may never be disused nor neglected. In the course of them he portrays himself as a friend of truth and justice, a man of sincere benevolence, and communicative of his good principles, as a man who honoured and feared the gods whom he was brought up to worship, although his mind carried him above the feebleness of superstition, and protected him against the arts of deception.

THE best part of beauty is that which a picture cannot express.—BACON.

HISTORY OF WRITING.

AMONGST the various arts and sciences which have from time to time contributed to the improvement and advancement of society, there is, perhaps, none which demands more justly the admiration and respect of mankind, none which, in point of utility and excellence, will at all admit of comparison with the art of Writing.

Yet because this art may now be acquired by everybody, it now fails to attract the attention, and command the admiration it so well merits. That which is common is despised. How curious or beautiful soever a new discovery may be, let it once become common, and from that moment it ceases to be noticed. And this principle extends in full force to the arts and sciences; those which are new and rare are cherished and courted; those, perhaps, in reality more useful and worthy, but which are within the grasp of everybody, are despised.

Time was, indeed, when the man who possessed this enviable accomplishment was distinguished highly above his fellows, and pointed out to notice as one who had made an achievement in science; but now, in these days of refinement and literature, who dare call himself accomplished, because he can write? The time will soon come, when the man who cannot write his own name, will stand a chance of acquiring celebrity, merely from the rarity and singularity of the character.

In spite of all this, it would be difficult to mention an art which has gone through more stages in its journey to perfection, has more exercised the talents and ingenuity of mankind in its gradual development, or required a longer period of time to bring it to maturity; and it may, perhaps, not be uninteresting to trace, as far as our limits will allow, its rise and progress.

Let us, first of all, obtain a definition of the term. Writing is an art, by means of which we communicate to an absent person, or to posterity, the ideas or objects which present themselves to our minds; and, in the present improved state of the art, this representation is made by means of arbitrary, yet fixed and defined signs, called letters.

In the first ages of the world, while society was in its infancy, mankind had clearly no other method of expressing their ideas in writing than the simple one of making a figure or shape of the object. And this mode must have been long before their dispersion; for it has been found to exist, more or less, amongst the most rude, as well as the most polished, nations of the globe,—nations, who from their natural position, and their immense distance from the other civilized parts of the world, could not have held any intercourse with the rest of mankind.

The difficulty, however, and labour attached to this mode of writing, soon induced the people to be satisfied with the *outlines* only of the figure which expressed the object; and this method seems to have obtained, in most, if not all, the nations of the earth. It was found in Mexico and Peru, at the discovery of America, and, in some respects, exists to the present time in China.

But, as this method of expressing objects, even by outlines, was still very troublesome, the Egyptians (for Egypt, be it remembered, was one of the earliest seats of every branch of art, literature, and science), adopted another and more intellectual mode, and this was to substitute a kind of mark, or simple character for the outlines of the object; these marks or characters still retained some resemblance to the figure made by the outlines, but they were less difficult, required less skill, and much less trouble, and were, therefore,

universally adopted. Yet, even here, there was a great deal of intricacy, and no small degree of patience and skill was required, either to understand, or make use of them. To simplify, therefore, the method of writing still further, the priests turned these outlines into arbitrary marks, which, although in the beginning, they might still preserve a faint resemblance to the natural objects, in course of time deviated so much from their originals, as to render it almost impossible to trace them to their archetype, but which were nevertheless much less complicated, and more expeditious. And thus, after incredible labour, and the lapse of a vast period of time, were produced the three different modes of writing among the Egyptians, designated by the appellation of *hieroglyphic*, *demotic*, and *hieratic*. Into the nature and use of these our limits do not permit us to enter more fully; they constitute a subject well worthy the attention of the scientific and curious, and which will well and abundantly repay the attention bestowed upon it.

We will, therefore, continue our inquiry, and proceed to the next step, and this was to form a connexion between the object represented by this hieroglyphical, or picture-writing, and the *sound* (for, as yet, letters were not) of the word used to express it. Nor was this so difficult as would at first sight be supposed; for when a man represented any image, or picture, that of "a door," for instance, he would naturally give to the combination of lines with which the figure was formed the name of "a door;" and wherever he met with this outline, or representation, or even though he should change it for some arbitrary and more simple mark, having the same signification, the same name would still remain attached to it, and by this means the word "door" would for ever afterwards become associated with a certain outline, or figure. The Hebrew alphabet affords a most satisfactory illustration of this. Every letter is, in fact, a word, and expresses some simple object. *Deleth*, for example, their fourth letter, corresponding with our D, signifies a "door;" *Beth*, their second letter, answering to our B, "a house;" *Gimel*, our G, "a camel;" *Jod*, or J, the "hand;" and this catalogue might be continued through the remaining letters, and thus it would be seen that to each of them is attached a meaning.

Having attained this state of advancement, the progress of the art was more rapid. Every nation, in its turn, contributed some letters to the common stock; in a happy moment it was discovered, that each monosyllable terminated by a sound, which, with very little variation, was repeated in all. Nor was it difficult to ascertain the number of these sounds, which were invariably fixed to the four or five inflexions of voice. Thus were vowels added to consonants, and mankind gradually arrived at the greatest of all inventions, the invention of the Alphabet.

But who was the man, or what his nation to whom the honour of so noble an invention is due? This is a subject which has long divided the learned, and the variety of opinions upon it is in truth appalling: but the presumption appears to be strongest in favour of *Thoth*, a son or descendant of *Mizraim*, the father of the Egyptians. The Phœnician writer, *Sancho-niatho*, expressly attributes the formation of the *Sacred Characters* of the alphabet to this celebrated person. There is, moreover, a passage in *Plato*, which, if rightly understood, and worthy of credit, should set the question at rest. He says, "That during the reign of Pharaoh *Thamus*, his secretary, *Thouth* or *Theuth*, came to lay before him, the several discoveries he had made, amongst which was, the invention of

the alphabet, and he came to consult Pharaoh Thamus whether it ought to be made public."

However, be this as it may, the utility of the new invention was very apparent; it diminished to a prodigious extent the difficulty of writing, it shortened the labour of memory, and was capable of expressing all subjects, all ideas, every possible thought, in the utmost variety with which they can affect the mind.

The Phœnicians appear to have been the first who obtained a knowledge of this system; they imparted it to the Jews and Arabians, and carried it over to Greece. From that country, it was exported to the several northern islands, and spread over the Continent, until it gradually became diffused over the whole world.

The Chinese alone rejected, and still continue to reject, the invaluable discovery; proud of the antiquity of their social establishment, and believing themselves superior to the rest of mankind, they still adhere to their ancient mode of writing (which approaches somewhat to the Hieroglyphics of Egypt), and afford, to this day, a practical illustration of the old proverb, that "pride and ignorance go hand in hand."

Thus have we given a faint sketch of the rise and progress of the art of writing, from the first attempts of mankind in picture-writing, down to the discovery and adoption of the alphabet. And in this state, with but little alteration, it still continues. The number of letters, and the mode of delineating them, have varied at different times, and in different nations, but the system remains, and will probably for ever remain the same.

THE DUTCH SHIPMASTER AND THE RUSSIAN COTTAGER.

THE following interesting anecdote occurs in a German work, lately published, intitled *A Picture of St. Petersburg*.

In a little town, five miles from St. Petersburg, lived a poor German woman. A small cottage was her only possession, and the visits of a few shipmasters, on their way to Petersburg, her only livelihood. Several Dutch shipmasters having supped at her house one evening, she found, when they were gone, a sealed bag of money under the table. Some one of the company, had no doubt forgotten it, but they had sailed over to Cronstadt, and the wind being fair, there was no chance of their putting back. The good woman put the bag into her cupboard, to keep it till it should be called for. Full seven years, however, elapsed, and no one claimed it; and though often tempted by opportunity, and oftener by want, to make use of the contents, the poor woman's good principles prevailed, and it remained untouched.

One evening, some shipmasters again stopped at her house for refreshment. Three of them were English, the fourth a Dutchman. Conversing on various matters, one of them asked the Dutchman, if he had ever been in that town before. "Indeed, I have," replied he, "I know the place but too well; my being here, cost me once seven hundred rubles." "How so?" "Why, in one of these wretched hovels, I once left behind me a bag of rubles." "Was the bag sealed?" asked the old woman, who was sitting in a corner of the room, and whose attention was roused by the subject. "Yes, yes, it was sealed, and with this very seal, here at my watch chain." The woman knew the seal instantly. "Well, then," said she, "by that you may recover what you have lost." "Recover it, mother! No, no, I am rather too old to expect that: the world is not quite so honest—besides it is full seven years since I lost the money;—say no more about it, it always makes me melancholy."

Meanwhile, the good woman slipped out, and presently returned with the bag. "See here," said she, "honesty is not so rare, perhaps, as you imagine" and she threw the bag on the table.

The guests were astonished, and the owner of the bag, as may be supposed, highly delighted. He seized the bag, tore open the seal, took out one ruble (worth 4s. 6d.,

English money), and laid it on the table for the hostess, thanking her civilly for the trouble she had taken. The three Englishmen were amazed and indignant at so small a reward being offered, and remonstrated warmly with him. The old woman protested she required no recompense for merely doing her duty, and begged the Dutchman to take back even his ruble. But the Englishmen insisted on seeing justice done; "The woman," said they, "has acted nobly, and ought to be rewarded." At length, the Dutchman agreed to part with one hundred rubles; they were counted out, and given to the old woman, who thus, at length, was handsomely rewarded for her honesty.

LIFE, AND ITS END.—Remember for what purpose you were born, and through the whole of life look at its end; and consider, when that comes, in what will you put your trust? Not in the bubble of worldly vanity; it will be broken: not in worldly pleasures; they will be gone: not in great connexions; they cannot serve you: not in wealth; you cannot carry it with you: not in rank; in the grave there is no distinction: not in the recollection of a life spent in a giddy conformity to the silly fashions of a thoughtless and wicked world; but in that of a life spent soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.—**BISHOP WATSON.**

A CURIOUS anecdote of the Raven is related in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. He lived many years ago at the Red Lion Inn, Hungerford, and was called Rafe. It is given in the words of a gentleman who lodged at the inn.

"Coming into the inn yard," says he, "my chaise ran over and bruised the leg of my Newfoundland dog; and while we were examining the injury, Rafe was evidently a concerned spectator; for, the minute the dog was tied up under the manger with my horse, Rafe not only visited him, but brought him bones, and attended on him with particular and repeated marks of kindness. I observed it to the ostler, who told me that the bird had been brought up with a dog, and that the affection between them was mutual, and all the neighbourhood had been witnesses of their many reciprocal acts of kindness. Rafe's poor dog after a while broke his leg, and during the long time he was confined, Rafe waited on him constantly, carried him his provisions, and scarcely ever left him alone. One night, by accident, the stable door had been shut, and Rafe had been deprived of the company of his friend the whole night; but the ostler found in the morning the door so pecked away, that had it not been opened, in another hour Rafe would have made his own entrance. My landlady confirmed this account, and mentioned several other acts of kindness shown by this bird to all dogs in general, but particularly to maimed or wounded ones."—**HANDCOCK'S Essay on Instinct.**

EPITAPH

IN THE CHURCHYARD OF FARNBOROUGH, IN KENT, ON A YOUNG LADY, WHO DIED AT THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN.

At that blest age, when hope, like life, is young,
And the warm feelings start upon the tongue;
When all th' affections, passions, charities,
Glow in the cheek, and sparkle in the eyes;
She left her parents' arms, her sister's side,
And, after years of suffering, calmly died.
The memory of her worth remains behind,
In hearts, not stone, in thoughts, not words, enshrined.
Her loss has left a wound no time can heal,
Which poets cannot paint, but mothers feel.

AMELLUS-LIKE KAULFUSSIA.

THIS flower, which, in spite of its ugly name, is beautiful, has been lately introduced from the Cape of Good Hope. It produces seeds very freely; and will, doubtless, be soon as well known as Mignonette and China Asters.

A great number of vegetables have some change of character, either by folding their leaves, closing their flowers, or other mode of protection, during the night, or the continuance of unpropitious weather. The *Kaulfussia amelloides*, (Amellus-like Kaulfussia,) as shown in our figure, possesses a peculiarity which is, in some degree, contrary to the usual laws of floral protection. In general, such plants as occasionally vary the position of the corolla, close it, more or less, over the centre of the flower, to guard the internal

organs from dew or rain. But this plant, at night, or in overcast weather, has its petals rolled back, apparently for their own protection, leaving the centre, or parts of fructification, wholly exposed.



The Amellus-like Kaufussia.

Linnaeus observed the habit of many plants, in closing their flowers, and gave a treatise on the subject, in the *Amenitates Academica*, vol. iv. He has noticed the habit of the *Nymphaea alba*, or White-flowering Water Lily, which is well known to close its flowers in the afternoon, and lay them on the surface of the water till morning, when it raises and expands them, often, in a bright day, to several inches above the water.

The ancient botanists also have recorded their observations on this subject; for Theophrastus, more than 300 years before the birth of our Saviour, wrote to the same effect, respecting the Egyptian Lotus; and further observes, that "It is reported that in the Euphrates, the head and flowers keep sinking till midnight, when they are so deep in the water as to be out of the reach of the hand, but towards morning they return, and still more as the day advances. At sunrise they are already above the surface, with the flower expanded; afterwards they rise high above the water."

We have raised the *Kaufussia amelloides* by sowing seeds in pots of light soil, put into a hotbed. When the young plants came up they were thinned; and in May, the contents of the pots were transferred to the borders, without breaking the balls of mould. It is not in any degree tender; and will succeed equally well, when sown in the borders; and, as it is an early flowerer, forcing becomes less important.

—MAUND'S Botanic Garden.

ANNIVERSARIES IN MARCH.

MONDAY, 11th.

1544 *Torquato Tasso*, the Italian epic poet, born at Sorrento.

TUESDAY, 12th.

Gregory the Great, born at Rome about 540, and became bishop of that city 590. He sent St. Augustine, with forty other missionaries, to preach the Gospel in England; where his festival was afterwards kept by decree of the Council of Oxford. St. Gregory was an ardent advocate for clerical celibacy, and the restorer of the ancient Missal. He died A.D. 604.

1682 Chelsea Hospital, for the support of superannuated and disabled soldiers, founded.

1689 King James II. landed at Kingsale, in Ireland, to attempt the recovery of the kingdoms he had abdicated.

1712 Queen Anne announced in the *London Gazette* her intention to touch patients afflicted with the Evil. This is the last time that any of our sovereigns have offered to exercise this imaginary power; but in 1745, the Pretender touched several patients so afflicted, in Edinburgh; with what effect may be easily imagined.

1713 The first number of the *Guardian* periodical paper published by Sir Richard Steele.

1800 Royal Institution opened.

1808 Dr. G. Gregory died.

WEDNESDAY, 13th.

565 *Belisarius*, the celebrated Roman general, died.

1634 The French Academy founded by a royal decree. Its principal object was to keep up the purity and perfection of the French language.

1695 *Jean de la Fontaine*, the French poet, author of the *Fables*, died in his seventy-fifth year.

1757 *Thomas Herring*, D.D., archbishop of Canterbury, died at Croydon. He had been previously bishop of Rochester and archbishop of York.

1781 A new planet discovered by Dr. Herschell, which he named, in compliment to his royal patron, King George III., the *Georgium Sidus*.

1808 Died, *Christian VIII.*, king of Denmark.

THURSDAY, 14th.

1757 *Admiral Byng* shot at Portsmouth, pursuant to the sentence of a Court Martial. He had previously given numerous proofs of courage, and met his death with the greatest resolution and composure. The justice of his sentence was loudly impeached at the time; and even several members of the court which had recommended him to mercy, made great, but ineffectual, attempts to save him, when it became evident that the capital punishment, which the strict Articles of War imposed upon him "for not doing his utmost," would be carried into effect.

1795 French fleet defeated by Admiral Hotham, and two sail of the line taken.

1803 *Frederick Klopstock*, author of *The Messiah* and other poems, died at Hamburg, aged 80, leaving behind him, not only the reputation of a truly sublime poet, but, what is much better, that of an amiable and pious man. His remains were honoured with a solemn funeral, such as Germany had never before witnessed for any man of letters.

FRIDAY, 15th.

In the 44th year before the Christian era, *Julius Cæsar* was assassinated in the Senate-house.

1784 The Rev. Dr. *Thomas Francklin*, rector of Brasted, in Kent, and translator of *Phalaris*, *Sophocles*, and *Lucan*, died. He was also author of two original tragedies; *The Earl of Warwick* and *Matilda*.

1824 The first pile of the New London Bridge driven.

SATURDAY, 16th.

1532 *Jord Berners*, the translator into English of *Froissart's Chronicle*, died.

1792 *Gustavus III.*, king of Sweden, was shot, at a masked-ball, by an assassin named *Ankerström*; of which wound he languished until the 29th, when he died.

1794 The island of *Martinique* taken by the British.

SUNDAY, 17th.

MIDLENT SUNDAY.—So called because it is the fourth or middle Sunday between *Quadragesima* (the first Sunday in Lent) and *Easter Sunday*. It was also formerly called the Sunday of the Five Loaves, the Sunday of Bread, and Refection, or Refreshment Sunday, in allusion to the Gospel of the day, which treats of our Saviour's miracle of feeding the five thousand. The common or vulgar appellation which this day still retains, is that of *Mothering Sunday*, arising from an ancient usage, which prevailed on it of visiting the mother churches of the several dioceses, and making voluntary offerings at the altar, then called *Quadragesimal Pennies*.

The 17th of March is also the anniversary of St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who, from the eminent services he rendered the inhabitants of that country, by rescuing them from the darkness of idolatry, is called the *Archbishop, Apostle, and Father of the Hibernian Church*. Very little is known of his real history, though we have fables in abundance. It is said that after studying thirty-five years under St. Martin, bishop of Tours, and St. German, bishop of Arles, he was consecrated a bishop by Pope Celestine, who changed his name to *Patrick*. He landed in Ireland, according to some accounts, in 432, or, according to others, in 441, founded the archbishopric of Armagh in 472, and died 17th March, 493, in his 120th year. St. Patrick's Day is kept throughout Ireland, and by the natives of that country in whatever part of the world they may be residing, with the utmost hilarity; which, among the higher classes, is rendered subservient to the sacred cause of charity. On this day, almost every Irishman wears in his hat the emblem of his country and its patron saint, the shamrock, or trefoil-grass, from the three conjoined leaves of which St. Patrick is said to have illustrated and enforced upon their pagan ancestors the sacred doctrine of the Trinity.

180 *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus*, emperor of Rome, died.

1640 *Philip Massinger*, the dramatic poet, died.

1714 Died, the celebrated prelate and historian, *Gilbert Burnet*, bishop of Salisbury, author of the *History of the Reformation of the Church of England*.

1783 The order of knighthood, called *The Order of St. Patrick*, established by King George III.

1800 H. M. ship *Queen Charlotte*, of 110 guns, bearing the flag of Lord Keith, took fire at sea off the port of Leghorn, in Italy, and blew up. Lord Keith was on shore at the time; but the acting commander, Captain Todd, and upwards of 800 of the crew perished by the explosion or by drowning.

1828 Sir *James Edward Smith*, author of several valuable works on natural history and botany, and first president of the Linnæan Society, died in his native city, Norwich.

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